

Message Text

PAGE 01 PRETOR 03350 111224Z

47

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBSSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NY

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 3350

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SF, PINS

SUBJ: SOWETO II: AN ASSESSMENT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

REF: PRETORIA 3230

1. THE GEOGRAPHIC PATTERN OF DISTURBANCES FOLLOWING THE
RENEWED VIOLENCE IN SOWETO ON AUGUST 4 (SOWETO II) FOLLOWS
A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT DISTRIBUTION THAN DURING THE SOWETO I
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PAGE 02 PRETOR 03350 111224Z

PHASE. SOWETO AND ALEXANDRA CONTINUE TO BE THE FOCAL POINTS.
THE CONCENTRATION OF ARSON AND RIOTING REMAINS IN THE HEAVILY
BLACK AREAS OF THE TRANSVAAL. FRESH OUTBREAKS HAVE TAKEN
PLACE IN DIFFERENT LOCALITIES IN THE EAST AND WEST RAND

NOT AFFECTED DURING SOWETO I. FOR EXAMPLE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS IN THE BLACK TOWNSHIP OF MAFEKING IS THE FIRST SERIOUS OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE IN A HOMELAND CAPTIAL. OTHER TOWNSHIPS PREVIOUSLY AFFECTED HAVE BEEN QUIET: PRETORIA TOWNSHIPS HAVE PASSED THIS PHASE WITH VERY FEW DISTURBANCES. INTERESTINGLY THE ORANGE FREE STATE AND NATAL HAVE BEEN VIRTUALLY FREE OF RIOTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS DURING SOWETO II. IN CAPE PROVINCE VIOLENCE BROKE OUT FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE (COLORED) AND IN BLACK TOWNSHIPS OF PORT ELIZABETH AND EAST LONDON. THE BLACK UNIVERSITIES (TURFLOOP, FT. HARE, ZULULAND) HAVE WITNESSED NO VIOLENCE IN THIS PHASE SINCE ALL HAVE BEEN CLOSED, ALTHOUGH THE FIRST TWO ARE SCHEDULED TO REOPEN SHORTLY. STUDENTS AT THE WHITE UNIVERSITIES, INCLUDING THE MORE LIBERAL WITWATERSRAND AND CAPE TOWN, HAVE REMAINED SILENT DURING THIS PERIOD.

2. FROM THE MOST RECENT ROUND OF VIOLENCE SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE UPRISINGS HAVE EMERGED IN SHARPER FOCUS:

A) THE MILITANCY OF BLACK YOUTHS SHOWS AN UNEXPECTED STAYING POWER. AT THE SAME TIME THE MORE RECENT TACTICS REVEAL A RECOGNITION THAT TO CONTINUE MOMENTUM THEY NEED (1) TO ENLIST THE ACTIVE COOPERATION OF ADULTS (WHICH SO FAR HAS BEEN LACKING), AND (2) MOVE OUTSIDE THE CONFINES OF THE TOWNSHIPS. HENCE SOWETO II EFFORTS WERE FIRST MADE TO MARCH ON JOHANNESBURG AND THEN TO PERSUADE ADULTS NOT TO GO TO WORK. FAILING IN BOTH OF THESE, THE ACTIVISTS IN THE SOWETO-ALEXANDRA AREA HAVE TRIED INTIMIDATION BY BLOCKING HIGHWAYS AND CUTTING RAIL SERVICE. THERE IS A DANGER THAT IN AN EFFORT TO POLARIZE BLACK ADULT OPINION YOUNG MILITANTS MAY TRY MORE SERIOUS CONFRONTATION WITH WHITE AUTHORITIES.

B) NO CLEAR LEADERSHIP HAS EMERGED DURING THE RIOTING EITHER FROM THE TRADITIONAL STUDENT GROUPS (SASO AND SASM) OR NEW
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PAGE 03 PRETOR 03350 111224Z

GROUPS. THE PATTERN THAT EMERGES IS MORE OF "STREET LEADERSHIP". IT IS NOT POSSIBLE ACCURATELY TO ESTIMATE THE DEGREE OR POSSIBLE SOURCE OF COORDINATION BETWEEN WIDELY SCATTERED INCIDENTS. THE GOVERNMENT CLAIMS THAT SUBVERSIVE GROUPS ARE MANIPULATING THE RIOTERS BUT HAS PRESENTED NO CONVINCING EVIDENCE. THE "BUSH TELEGRAPH" IS PROBABLY AT WORK AT THE STUDENT AND YOUNG TEACHER LEVEL. BUT THERE IS ALSO AN ELEMENT OF SPONTANEITY IN ALIENATED STUDENTS AND YOUTH GROUPS WHO WANT TO SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH THE BLACK PROTEST MOVEMENT IN SOWETO.

C) SIX WEEKS OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND RIOTS REVEAL WHAT LITTLE CONTROL BLACK ADULT GROUPS EXERCISE IN THE SITUATION.

PARENTAL AUTHORITY HAS BEEN IGNORED. SAG-APPROVED URBAN BLACK INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS SOWETO'S URBAN BANTU COUNCIL (UBC) ARE COMPLETELY REJECTED. THE BLACK PARENT'S ASSOCIATION (BPA) WHICH EMERGED DURING SOWETO II, WHILE MORE CLOSELY ATTUNED TO BLACK MILITANT VIEWS, IS STILL NOT CONSIDERED ENTIRELY REPRESENTATIVE BY THE YOUNG BLACKS. BLACK UNIVERSITY AND SECONDARY LEADERS WHO MIGHT HAVE FORMED A NATURAL LEADERSHIP CORE HAVE BEEN SYSTEMATICALLY IMPRISONED OR INTIMIDATED AND ARE NOT AROUND TO FILL THE GAP.

D) THE SAG STRATEGY CONTINUES TO BE TO CONFINE DISTURBANCES TO THE TOWNSHIPS AND WAIT FOR THINGS TO QUIET DOWN BEFORE DIALOGUING WITH ADULT BLACK LEADERS. WHEN THE GOING GETS ROUGH, IT WITHDRAWS WHITE POLICE FROM THE AREA, MONITORS EVENTS THROUGH ROVING PATROLS AND BLACK POLICE AND MAKES IT VERY CLEAR THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO MOVE OUTSIDE THE TOWNSHIP WILL BE STOPPED. POLICE FORCES HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN TURNING BACK THE ATTEMPTS TO MARCH OUT OF SOWETO. THEY ARE MAKING GREAT EFFORTS TO KEEP TRAINS AND BUSES RUNNING AT LEAST FROM THE PERIPHERY OF THE TOWNSHIPS. WISER CONTROL MEASURES DURING SOWETO HAVE RESULTED IN FEWER CASUALTIES THAN IN SOWETO I. IN THE WAKE OF SOWETO I THE GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATED WITH SOWETO UBC MEMBERS AND THE "COMMITTEE OF 30" COMMUNITY LEADERS. AFTER SOWETO II IT SUSPENDED THESE TALKS AND HAS TAKEN THE STANCE THAT IT WILL NOT ENGAGE IN TALKS WITH BLACK GROUPS UNTIL ORDER HAS BEEN RESTORED. THE SAG HAS SO FAR MADE NO EFFORT TO BRING TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES WHO MIGHT HELP IN ESTABLISHING A CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 PRETOR 03350 111224Z

DIALOGUE WITH YOUNG BLACKS ABOUT THEIR GRIEVANCES. MINISTER OF JUSTICE KRUGER, ON THE CONTRARY, HAS TURNED DOWN A BID BY BPA FOR TALKS ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT IS UNREPRESENTATIVE.

3. IN SOWETO, AS WELL AS ON A NATIONAL SCALE, THE SAG FACES A DILEMMA IN DIALOGUING WITH BLACKS ABOUT RACIAL POLICIES. IN THE SOWETO CONTEXT TO MAKE TOO MANY CONCESSIONS WILL INVITE FURTHER DEMANDS. DIE VADERLAND, THE MOUTH PIECE OF THE NATIONAL PARTY IN THE TRANSVAAL, EDITORIALIZED ON AUGUST 3 "THE BIGGEST MISTAKE WE CAN NOW MAKE IS TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT WE FEEL OVERWHELMED, PREPARED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS TO UNREALISTIC DEMANDS. THIS WOULD SIMPLY SERVE TO STIMULATE OUR ENEMIES". BUT NOT TO MAKE MEANINGFUL CONCESSIONS WILL RESULT IN INCREASED BLACK FERMENT WITH THE DANGER OF NEW DISTURBANCES WHICH MAY NOT BE SO EASY TO QUELL AND THEN ONLY AT A PRICE THAT MAY AGGRAVATE THE SITUATION ON A NATIONAL SCALE. THE SAG HAS BEEN UNWILLING TO MAKE CONCESSIONS IN A NATIONAL CONTEXT BECAUSE MEANINGFUL MEASURES INVOLVE A DEGREE OF POWER SHARING AND SOCIAL BARRIER LOWERING THAT COULD OVER TIME COMPROMISE AFRIKANER POLITICAL SUPREMACY. AS A RESULT THE SAG IS TEMPORIZING, OUTWARDLY CONFIDENT THAT IT CAN CONTAIN VIOLENCE IN THE

BLACK AREAS, PREPARED TO CONSIDER MINOR CONCESSIONS IN THE HOPE OF ALLEVIATING PRESSURES, BUT STILL STRONGLY RESISTANT TO NEGOTIATING A NEW ORDER WITH ANY OF THE NON-WHITE GROUPS.

4. THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONTINUED VIOLENCE CONTINUE TO BE THOSE SET FORTH IN OUR ASSESSMENT FOLLOWING SOWETO I (PARA 8 AND 9 PRETORIA 2761). WE SENSE A HIGHER LEVEL OF APPREHENSION AMONG WHITES AS THE VIOLENCE CONTINUES AND EFFORTS ARE MADE TO CARRY THE PROTESTS OUTSIDE THE TOWNSHIPS. THERE IS A GREATER AWARENESS ON PART OF SAG OF THE ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS AS REFLECTED IN MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HEUNIS' STATEMENT AUGUST 8 THAT THE "UNSETTLED CONDITIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA" HAD CAUSED A DECLINE IN THE INFLOW OF FOREIGN CAPITAL. BUT THE CONCERN HAS NOT REACHED THE POINT WHERE IT IS PROVOKING A REASSESSMENT OF BASIC POLICY ON DOMESTIC RACIAL QUESTIONS.
BOWDLER

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